

Lesson 3: Materialism

Introduction:

Asceticism	Proverbs 30	Materialism
Poverty is piety.	Balanced.	Money is god.

Philosophical Materialism – Marx, Darwin, ...

Worldview: Matter is all that exists.
No spirits (or a god!)—life is just chemicals.

Practical Materialism

Most Americans believe that God exists, but live for things.
Instead of pursuing God, Americans are pursuing things.
Proof: Sports – big-money buildings, thousands of sports, even our food is competition.
The food channel shows adults playing with their food!

What is the problem with practical materialism?

Idolatry – It is a form of greed (the love of money).

Dt. 6:4 – There is one God.
Dt. 6:5 – Therefore, you should love this God with all of yourself.
The Job Question: Do you love God *only* because of what He gives you?
In other words, are you *using* God to *enjoy* things (Augustine)?
Wow, how this is put to the test with affliction!

Unsatisfying – When income increases, so does consumption (Eccl. 5:10-12).

Unless you are poor, earning more will not solve the problem.
When we earn more, we tend to spend more.

Self-Inflicted Pains – Love of things hurts ourselves:

We then live complex lives, with stuff complicating our decisions and priorities.
We then suffer more loss, when we lose more things.
We are tempted more, and fall into more traps, etc. (1 Tim. 6:9-10).
Remember: things will not make us happy now (Proverbs 27:20) or later (Proverbs 11:4).

Source of Evil – Love of things hurts others:

In order to get our stuff, we will lie and steal and hoard, and do all manner of evil.
Examples: Achan, Gehazi, Jezebel (with Naiboth), and Judas Iscariot.

Instead, let us learn to be content (1 Tim. 6:6-8; Prov. 30). We have God (Heb. 13:5-6)!

Joshua Becker's Story

Our story begins in suburban Vermont while I was cleaning the garage, my wife was cleaning the bathrooms, and my 5-year old son was playing alone in the backyard. I struck up a regular conversation with my neighbor who commented, "Maybe you don't need to own all this stuff."

The juxtaposition was striking. My possessions piled up in the driveway... my son in the backyard... my day slipping away... I immediately recognized something needed to change. My belongings were not adding value to my life. Instead, they were subtracting from it.

Source: <https://www.becomingminimalist.com/becoming-minimalist-start-here/> (3/26/19)

Book: The Minimalist Home